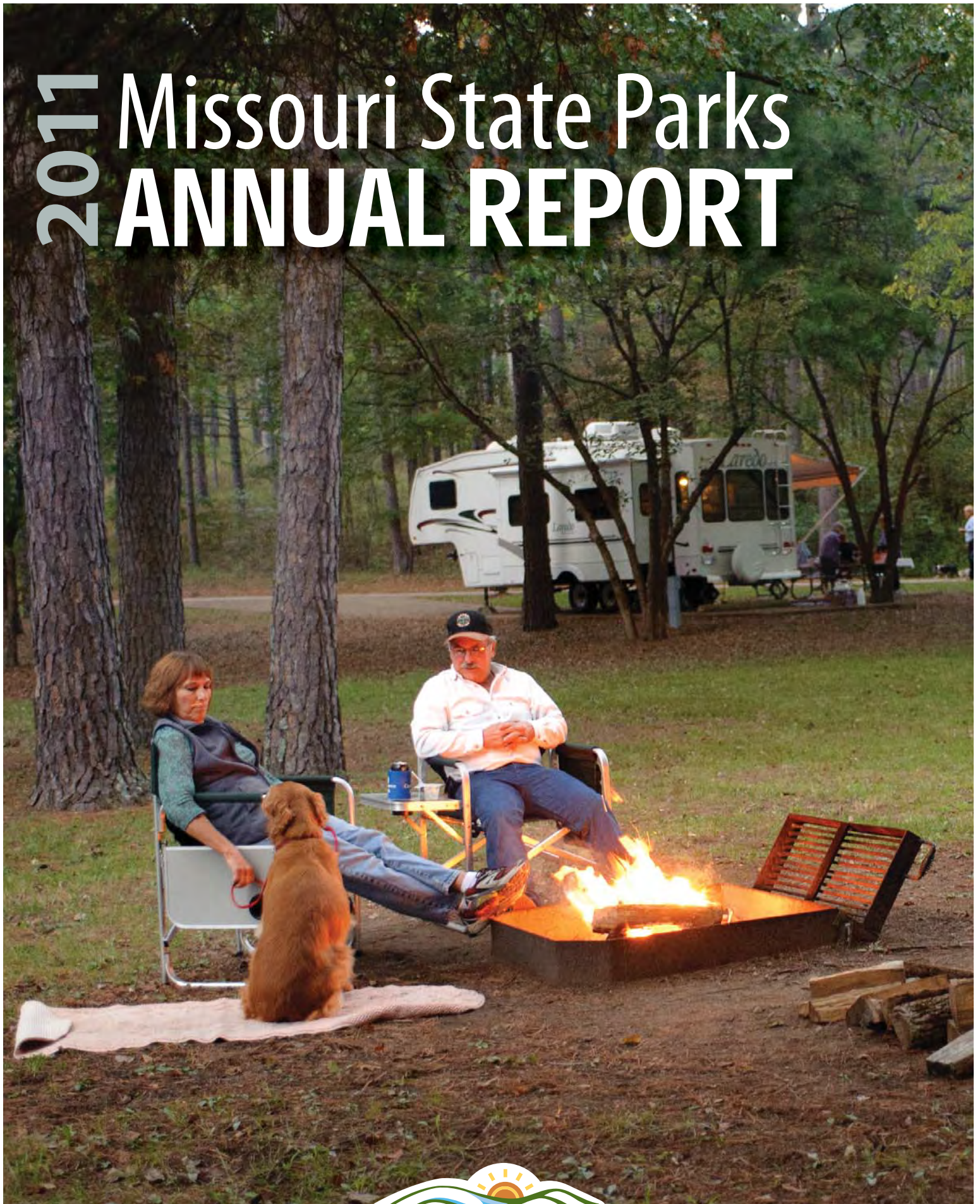


2011 Missouri State Parks ANNUAL REPORT



February 2012

Dear Friend of Missouri State Parks,

Missouri's state park system, which on five occasions has been ranked as one of the top four state park systems in the nation, includes 85 state parks and historic sites plus the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry. With more than 200,000 acres available to the public, the state park system has something for everyone. The system includes homes of famous Missourians, Civil War battlefields, and reminders of yesterday such as gristmills and covered bridges. We also protect and preserve the state's most outstanding landscapes – deep forests, glades, prairies, blue streams and clear lakes – for everyone's enjoyment.

In 2011, nearly 18 million people visited our state parks to hike, camp, fish, discover the past and simply explore nature. The system is managed by around 500 dedicated full-time employees and approximately 1,000 seasonal employees. Our team does a great job making sure our guests enjoy their Missouri state park experience. Thanks to our team's efforts, our state parks consistently earn a 97 percent approval rating from our guests. And we make sure our guests enjoy their visit while being good stewards of your tax dollars. Again this year, by working efficiently and spending wisely, we are operating with a balanced budget.

To help visitors enjoy their stay, the system offers 3,717 campsites, 323 lodging units, almost 2,000 picnic sites, and more than 900 miles of trail. These trails include opportunities for hikers, backpackers, bicycle riders, off-road vehicle users and horseback riders to get out and play. Visitors come from all over the world to experience the 240-mile Katy Trail State Park – the longest developed rail-to-trail project in the nation.

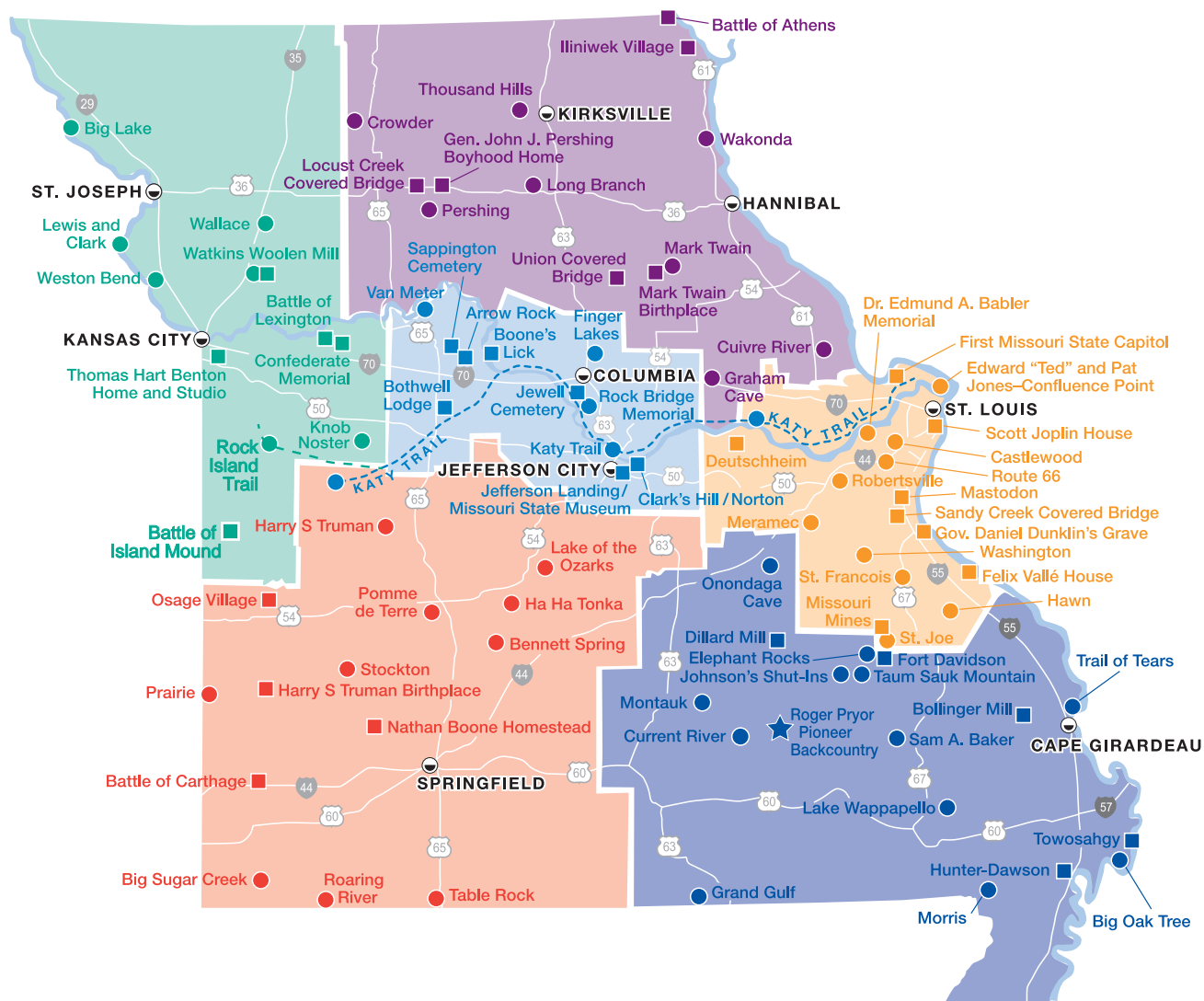
Missourians are proud of their state parks. In 1984, Missourians voted to support state parks and soil conservation with a 1/10th of a cent sales tax. When the sales tax was last renewed at the polls in 2006, more than 71 percent of Missourians voted to renew it. We appreciate and highly value your support. You have my word that we will always respect the trust that you have placed in us to operate your state park system. We won't let you down.

Remember, "You Are Always Welcome in Missouri State Parks!"

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Bryan", with a stylized flourish at the end.

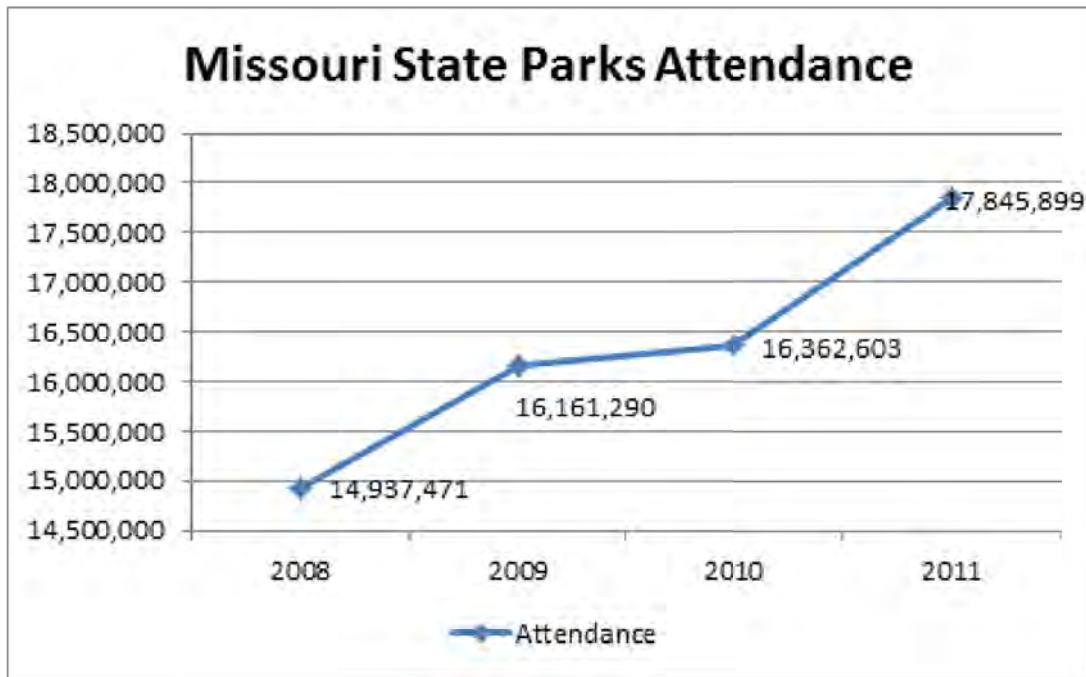
Bill Bryan,
Director, Missouri State Parks

Missouri State Parks

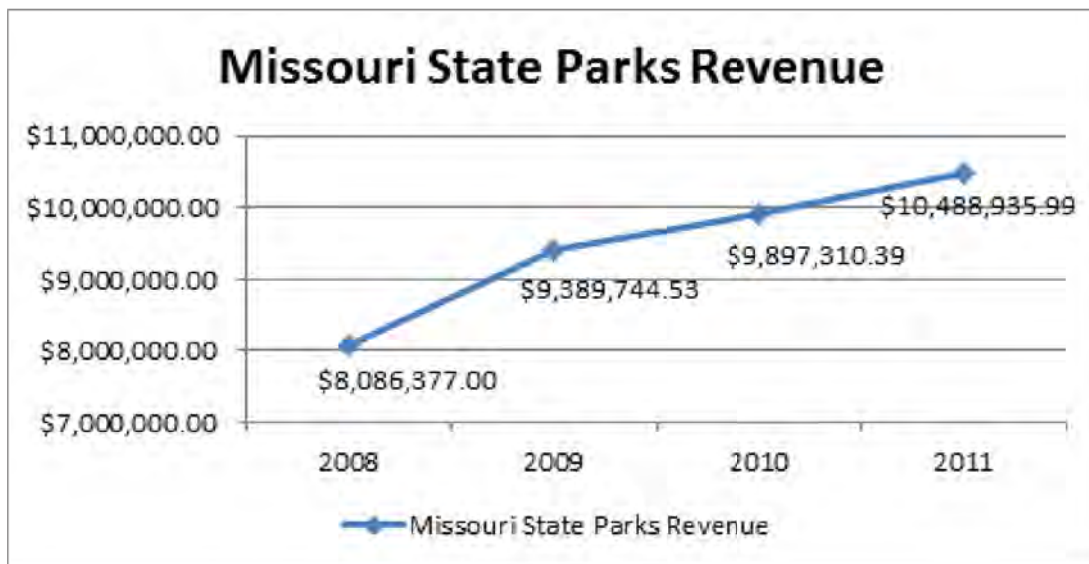


Quick Facts for 2011

- Nearly 18 million guests visited Missouri state parks and historic sites.
- State park interpreters interacted with more than 1.6 million guests.
- Park operations generated 9.4 percent more revenue than 2010.
- Concession operations returned over \$1.5 million to the state park system.
- Revenues exceeded expenditures for the third consecutive year.
- More than 500 events were held in Missouri state parks and historic sites.



After a 10-year decline, attendance continues to grow for the third straight year, as does the revenue we earn from operating our state parks and historic sites. The parks-and-soils sales tax provides 75 percent of the funds we need to operate our parks and historic sites. That means we need to earn revenue in our campgrounds, lodging units, stores and restaurants to cover the cost of running the parks—not to mention the added costs of capital improvements or maintenance that has been deferred.



Missouri state parks are award-winning.

In 2011, many independent groups recognized the excellence that is Missouri State Parks.

— The Katy Trail State Park garnered multiple accolades from satisfied customers. Partners for Progress of Greater St. Charles recognized the Katy Trail with the 2011 Quality of Place Progress Award. *Rural Missouri* magazine readers picked Katy Trail State Park as the favorite trail



in four of the state's five regions. AAA Midwest Travelers magazine voted the Katy Trail as the best bicycle trail in the Midwest. If you have not yet visited Katy Trail State Park, make it a destination this year.

— The American Sailing Association recognized the Stockton State Park Marina Sailing School as the best inland sailing school in the nation—for the third consecutive year!

— The design work at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park was recognized with an Excellence in Planning Award from the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners.

— Table Rock State Park's outstanding new White River Valley Trail for mountain biking and hiking was recognized with an award from the Coalition for Recreational Trails. The trail was one of only seven nationwide recognized in 2011.

— The Missouri State Museum located in the State Capitol received the Heritage Advocate Award from the national group's Heritage Preservation and Institute of Museum and Library Services.

We succeed with winning partnerships.

Partnerships play a key role in enhancing quality service in a cost-effective way. Through a partnership with Good Solutions Group, the state park system's main statewide publication was produced at no cost to taxpayers.

Through a partnership with Clif Bar, the state park system distributed 30,000 free Clif bars at state parks and historic sites. As part of this product awareness campaign, Missouri State Parks received 3 cents for each Clif Bar enjoyed by a hungry state park visitor!

A continuing partnership with the juice and nutrition bar company Odwalla for the Odwalla Plant-a-Tree Program resulted in \$3,603 for trees for the city of Joplin and Joplin area parks. Odwalla also provided free energy bars for the annual Katy Trail Ride during which more than 300 cyclists enjoy a supported trek across the Katy Trail. And

we are making partners to help us move into the digital age. A partnership with ParksbyNature has delivered free new mobile applications for smartphones at no cost to the park system or customers.

Missouri State Parks is among the nation's very best.

Missouri State Parks was recognized as one of the best state park systems in the nation as a finalist for the 2011 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Parks and Recreation Administration. This competitive program to find America's best state park system is held every other year by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, the National Recreation and Park Association and Musco Lighting LLC. The Gold Medal Award honors states that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, and program and professional development. Missouri State Parks is proud to be one of the top state park systems in the country and will continue to provide quality facilities, services, and experiences for each visitor.

Jobs for young people in parks is a "win-win."

The State Parks Youth Corps (SPYC) employed more than 625 young Missourians working in our state parks



and historic sites for a second successful year. The SPYC completed more than 177,500 hours of work in our state parks in 2011. The program allowed young people to gain a deeper knowledge of the outdoors and learn valuable skills that will aid their future careers.

Participants ages 17-21 worked a maximum of 400 hours making \$7.25 per hour. The SPYC assisted with cleanup following the Joplin tornado, helped in trail construction, conducted interpretation programs, and performed many other tasks at our state parks and historic sites.

Camp Pin Oak rises from the ashes with help from State Fair Community College.

An innovative project to rebuild a historic dining lodge launched at Lake of the Ozarks State Park, thanks to a partnership between Missouri State Parks and State Fair Community College with funding from the Missouri Department of Economic Development. The Camp Pin Oak dining lodge was destroyed by fire in the fall of 2010 and is being rebuilt by the community college students as a yearlong training and education project. The original dining lodge, built in the 1930s, was considered one of

the state park system's finest examples of Civilian Conservation Corps' structures. The new lodge is expected to be completed in late 2012. Without this help from our friends, we would not be able to rebuild this important structure.

We are blazing new trails in Missouri State Parks.

Several trail achievements were celebrated in 2011. A major milestone in the history of Katy Trail State Park was marked with the opening of the 11-mile section of trail between St. Charles and Machens. This section is the last section of the original Missouri-Kansas-Texas corridor acquired and officially completes the original trail. Another milestone was the opening of the Pat Jones Pedestrian/Bicycle Lane on the Missouri River bridge linking Katy Trail State Park to Jefferson City. Other major trail openings in the system include the award-winning 10.25-mile White River Valley Trail for hiking and mountain biking at Table Rock State Park and the challenging 2.75-mile Kelley Branch Mountain Bike Trail at Finger Lakes State Park. We are well on our way to having 1,000 miles of trails for you to explore.



Four score and seven years ago . . .



The four-year sesquicentennial of the Civil War officially began in April 2011. Missouri State Parks participated in this national commemoration through re-enactments, living

history demonstrations, and special programming. Two historic sites, Battle of Athens State Historic Site and Battle of Lexington State Historic Site, hosted major re-enactments.

The Battle of Athens represents the northernmost Civil War battle in Missouri. In August, approximately 100 military and civilian re-enactors and 1,800 visitors gathered in the small village of Athens for a re-enactment of a battle between untrained local militia units that truly pitted father against son in the early days of the Civil War.

The re-enactment of the Battle of Lexington in September provided visitors an opportunity to learn about a

significant battle as they watched 900 Civil War re-enactors depict the final day of the siege of Lexington by Gen. Sterling Price's Missouri State Guard. Throughout the rainy weekend, 2,300 guests visited the historic site, and approximately 14,000 viewed the battle re-enactments.

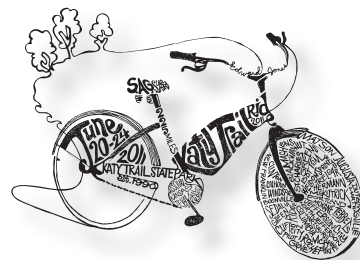
We know camping.

As the premier provider of camping opportunities in the state, Missouri State Parks offers 3,717 total campsites and 323 lodging units. We have something for everyone, whether you are looking for a basic campsite or full hook-up, or a rustic cabin or a fully-modern unit with all the conveniences of home. But camping is our bread and butter, and we know camping. In 2011, looking at all of the nights available in all of our campsites throughout the season, we hosted campers for a total of 240,458 nights!

All our events are special.

Missouri State Parks host numerous special events around the state every year. The goal is simple: to provide an enjoyable experience for all visitors. A few highlighted events that were held in 2011 follow.

— **Katy Ride 2011:** The 11th annual Katy Trail Ride, hosted by Missouri State Parks and the Missouri State Parks Foundation, was as popular as ever in 2011. Since 2000, the five-day Katy Trail Ride has proven to be a very popular event with the ride selling out each year. Participants biked 225 miles with logistics organized by state parks staff. This year included overnight stops in Sedalia, Boonville, Jefferson City, Marthasville and St. Charles. Cyclists started their ride in Clinton and finished in St. Charles. Over 300 participants from around the country took part in the 2011 ride.



— **Wings over Weston:**

Wings over Weston is a two-day event held at Weston Bend State Park introducing school children and families to the fascinating world of birds and their role in our natural environment. This event informs our visitors about Weston Bend State Park's role as an important bird area. Over 180 fourth grade students participated and more than 400 attended the public event.

— **WOW:** Missouri State Parks participates in annual WOW National Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Schools that encourage families and individuals to learn more about outdoor activities. WOW schools are held in Kansas City, Springfield, St. Louis, Columbia and near Cassville at Roaring River State Park. Each year, over 600

participants are taught new skills by outdoor professionals. Participants can sign-up for archery, kayaking, camping, fishing or even Dutch oven cooking and more! Missouri State Parks works with many partners, public and private, to make WOW schools a possibility. Check the website, mostateparks.com, for the 2012 school dates.

Park Rangers keep our visitors safe.

Missouri State Park Rangers are dedicated public servants who steadfastly perform their duties, often without regard for their own safety. In 2011, two members of the Ranger Program received significant honors. Ranger Chuck Helton received the State of Missouri Employee of the Month award for his quick response in rescuing two children from fast-moving water at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park. Ranger Roger Moore received the Missouri State Employee Award of Distinction for risking his life attempting to save a man who had driven his car into the lake at Thousand Hills State Park.



Volunteer In Parks and be treated like a VIP.

Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) provide valuable assistance to Missouri State Parks on a wide variety of tasks and projects around the state. In 2011, our volunteers completed 366,742 hours of work. Volunteers assist people in visitor centers and contact stations, help catalog historic items and documents, and serve as natural history interpreters and tour guides. Some VIPs perform maintenance or light construction tasks, or help with constructing or renovating trails. There is almost no limit to the types of work that volunteers can perform. The main requirement is a willingness to serve.

To learn more about volunteering in a Missouri State Parks facility visit mostateparks.com.

Missouri Mines State Historic Site

made a lasting impression on J.S. of Delaware:

"Our impression for the entire state of Missouri was made at your state parks. We were greatly impressed. Thanks for all you did!"

A visitor from Eldon praised **Lake of the Ozarks State Park**:

"We use your group camp every year for a family reunion and come from three different states. It is awesome!!! Children that live in the city get to see nature they can only read about. This year we saw a fawn about three days old, armadillo, raccoons of course, bugs, frogs, spiders, all the neat outdoor stuff!!!"

Dan from Iowa said this about **Table Rock State Park**:

"Beautiful! Missouri parks are Midwest's BEST! Keep up the good work. We will come back."

A family visit to **Prairie State Park** was a hit for visitors from Ozark:

"The drawers at the visitors center with all sorts of hidden treasures were a hit with our son. We were thrilled to see a bison come right up outside the building. We are eager to return again when it isn't raining and perhaps when flowers are at peak bloom at other times of the year."



Here's what one of our visitors had to say about **Katy Trail State Park**:

"I live in outer St. Louis and we take the train to Sedalia and ride back. I have done it seven times with different people. It is the greatest experience. I love it. Never got sick of it. Would still be going, but ran out of people that would go. It's so special. It's a feeling as much as an experience and I appreciate all that is done to allow us to do this."

A visitor from Tennessee said this about **Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park**

"I have been coming to this park for forty years. It is amazing how the park has been rebuilt after the breach. Beautiful, outstanding job. Thank you."



2012 is going to be awesome.

Missouri has a strong state park system. Many parks across the country are closing, but not in Missouri. The state park system is strong and growing. In 2012, we will open two new sites for you to enjoy. Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site, near Butler, will memorialize and tell the story of the first time African-American soldiers fought for freedom in the Civil War. An ongoing project is the Rock Island Trail State Park. When this trail is completed, it will connect the Katy Trail State Park at Windsor to Pleasant Hill in the Kansas City area. Missouri State Parks is excited to continue providing opportunities for visitors to experience Missouri's rich natural settings and cultural history.



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